

February 18, 2000

The Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg
United States Senate
506 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-3002

Dear Senator Lautenberg:

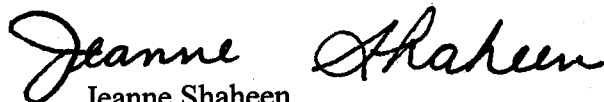
On behalf of the Coalition of Northeastern Governors (CONEG), we want to thank you for your personal efforts to establish a long-term, dedicated source of capital for intercity passenger rail. The creation of an investment tool which leverages federal, state and private sector investment for improved rail service will benefit the Northeast Corridor, the entire Atlantic Coast Corridor, and rail corridors across the nation.

Rail projects throughout the Northeast can benefit from innovative investment strategies such as the one you propose. Potential projects include the re-emergence of service from Boston to Portland via New Hampshire; developments on the Empire Corridor; and activities along the Northeast Corridor in preparation of the arrival of Acela service. For the northern New England states, the provision of funding for non-high speed intercity rail services ensures that the benefits of such investments are distributed nationally.

Intercity passenger rail makes a unique contribution to the complex fabric of the nation's transportation network, particularly in the Northeast. A stable investment tool will enhance states' ability to build long-term, comprehensive regional strategies — strategies which can capture the economic, social and environmental benefits of the rail alternative. For example, a coordinated regional strategy for a transportation corridor could allow for better use of critical airport slots by using rail options for short and medium length trips, and air travel for long distance trips. The ultimate beneficiary of such intermodal options is the traveling public. Providing a broader array of choices can move people and goods more efficiently, thereby fostering greater reliability and safety.

Again, our thanks for all your efforts to make intercity passenger rail a key component of the national transportation system.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen

Chair

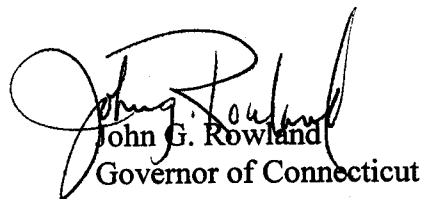
Governor of New Hampshire



George E. Pataki

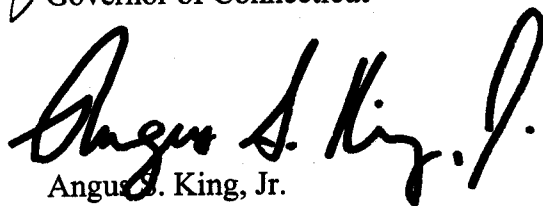
Vice Chair

Governor of New York



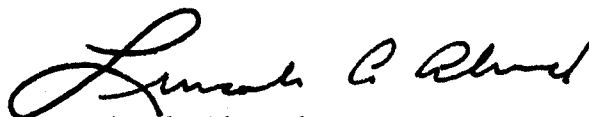
John G. Rowland

Governor of Connecticut



Angus S. King, Jr.

Governor of Maine



Lincoln Almond

Governor of Rhode Island



Howard Dean, M.D.

Governor of Vermont